



For immediate release

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RTA REACTS TO GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH'S MASS TRANSIT FUNDING OFFER

Statement by RTA Board Chair Jim Reilly:

As Chairman of the Board of the Regional Transportation Authority's Board of Directors, I greatly appreciate the Governor's offer to advance funds otherwise available in 2008 to avoid the scheduled fare increases and service reductions on the CTA system, as well as on the Pace mainline system and regional paratransit service.

No one wants more than I do to come up with a solution that avoids such problems next week, next month and next year, and I look forward to continuing to work with the four legislative leaders, the Governor's Office, Representatives Hamos and Mathias, the three service boards and the transit unions on that task.

However, everyone also needs to bear in mind that the RTA was originally created primarily to provide fiscal oversight and to ensure that mass transit in northeastern Illinois is operated in a prudent manner. As such, I along with Steve Schlickman, RTA Executive Director, and my fellow Board members take our duties very seriously.

On its face, the proposal averts an immediate crisis, but may create an even greater problem in the coming months. Given the current political dynamic in Springfield, the RTA has to decide whether it is prudent to "hope" legislative leaders and the Governor will act to place the regional transit system on sound, permanent footing.

The RTA Board and staff will take the time between now and Friday, the day of our board meeting, to understand those issues better and to weigh those risks against the immediate good that adopting this proposal would bring. Since I as Chairman don't yet know the outcome of those deliberations, no one should assume that they do either.

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About the RTA: The RTA provides financial oversight, funding and regional planning for the three public transit operations in northeastern Illinois: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus and train, Metra commuter rail and Pace suburban bus and paratransit. For more information, visit www.rtachicago.com and www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org.

